THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. A National Conference on Civil Aviation was held on 18.01.2008 at New Delhi. It was attended, amongst others, by some concerned Ministers and Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories (UTs). The purpose was to sensitise the States/UTs regarding the various policies and programmes of the Government of India as well as to provide a forum to the States to project issues of their concern.

(b) Yes, Sir. As the Sales Tax (ST) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) is levied by State Government, there was a need to involve them in the discussions to consider its moderation.

(c) Yes, Sir. At present fuel cost accounts for almost 45 to 50% of the total operating cost of airlines.

(d) & (e) The response of the States was positive. So far Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan (with some conditions) and Maharashtra (except at Mumbai and Pune airports) have reduced ST on ATF to 4%.

Naming of aircrafts

†4162. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has decided its new planes to be named after States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Air India has decided to buy new planes; and

(d) if so, the number of new planes to be purchased and the amount to be spent thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India have decided to name the newly ordered B777 and B787 aircraft after the States of India in alphabetical order. The 8 B777 aircraft which have been received so far, have accordingly, been named as Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat and Haryana.

(c) and (d) Erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines have ordered a total of 111 aircraft from M/s. Boeing and Airbus which are being delivered in phases upto 2011. The project cost is approximately Rs. 44,000 crore.

Offloading of passengers

4163. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the incident on the 29 March, 2008 at the Mumbai Airport where a passenger was offloaded from the plane IX243 by one captain as reported in media, if so, the details thereof;

(b) if so, what action has been taken in this regard; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether in the past any important person has been offloaded in this manner?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. A Bahrain bound passenger on Air India Express flight IX243 on 29.03.2008 was not allowed to board the aircraft by the Captain as he arrived late for boarding.

(b) The matter has been investigated and all cocnerned have been advised to be more customer friendly ensuring that there are no unnecessary delays to the flights.

(c) As far as NACIL's is concerned, there has been no such incident reported at Mumbai airport.

Bird menace at runways

4164. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the accidents due to coming of birds on the runway has been increasing day by day;

(b) if so, the number of such incidents during the last three years; and

(c) what are the steps Government is taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There was no aircraft accident during the last three years due to bird hits. However, 189, 167 and 217 bird hit incidents were reported during the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively.

(c) Airfield Environment Management Committees have been constituted at those airports where scheduled flights operate to identify the source of bird attraction and take remedial steps for prevention of such incidents. Various specific steps such as proper disposal of garbage, prevention of water logging. coverage of garbage bins, establishment of modern abattoirs scaring of birds etc. have also been taken to reduce the incidence of bird hits.

Aviation projects in States

4165. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of civil aviation schemes run in States during the current five year plan as on date;

(b) the progress made under it till date;

(c) whether work on these schemes is progressing keeping with the schedule;

(d) if so, the amount incurred thereon as on date; and

(e) the total amount sanctioned for these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) List of major schemes undertaken by Airports Authority of